



A flower and a picture are left as a tribute to Russian politician Alexei Navalny, near to the Russian Embassy in London, Feb. 18, 2024.

Associated Press

U.S. and EU pile new sanctions on Russia for the Ukraine war's 2nd anniversary and Navalny's death

By **FATIMA HUSSEIN** and **LORNE COOK**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States and European Union on Friday heaped hundreds of new sanctions on Russia in connection

with the second anniversary of its invasion of Ukraine and in retaliation for the death of noted Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny last week in an Arctic penal colony. The U.S. government imposed roughly 600 new

sanctions on Russia and its war machine in the largest single round of penalties since Russia's invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022. The EU, for its part, added sanctions on several foreign companies over alle-

gations that they have exported dual-use goods to Russia that could be used in its war against Ukraine. The 27-nation bloc also targeted scores of Russian officials, including members of the judiciary, local poli-

tics and people it said were "responsible for the illegal deportation and military re-education of Ukrainian children."

Continued on next page

LIVE ENTERTAINMENT 7 DAYS A WEEK						PROFESSIONAL COMPLIMENTARY PICTURES ON TUESDAY AND FRIDAY	
SUNDAY: MARRYBELL MADURO SINGER 6:30 - 8:30pm	MONDAY: ANGELA FLORES VIOLINIST 6:30 - 8:30pm	TUESDAY: JEAN PAUL SAXOPHONIST 6:30 - 8:30pm	WEDNESDAY: EDDIE KROON SINGER 4:00 - 6:00pm MAILLEYN ALVARADO VIOLINIST 6:30 - 8:30pm KARAOKE 9:00 - 11:00pm	THURSDAY: MARRYBELL MADURO SINGER 6:30 - 8:30pm	FRIDAY: RICKY THOMAS GUITARIST 7:00 - 9:00pm	SATURDAY: EDDIE KROON SINGER 4:00 - 6:00pm ANGELA FLORES VIOLINIST 6:30 - 8:30pm	Happy Hour 12-1/4-6/9-10 PREMIUM BRANDS

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President Joe Biden speaks about his meeting with Alexei Navalny's widow Yulia Navalnaya and daughter Dasha, in San Francisco, Feb. 22, 2024.

Associated Press

Continued from Front

President Joe Biden said the sanctions come in response to Russian President Vladimir Putin's "brutal war of conquest" and to Navalny's death, adding that "we in the United States are going to continue to ensure that Putin pays a price for his aggression abroad and repression at home."

But while previous sanctions have increased costs for Russia's ability to fight in Ukraine, they appear to have done little so far to deter Putin and it was unclear that the latest big round would significantly alter that.

In specific response to Navalny's death, the State Department targeted three Russian officials the U.S. says are connected to his death, including the deputy director of Russia's Federal Penitentiary Service, who was promoted by Putin to the rank of colonel general on Monday, three days after Navalny died.

The sanctions bar the officials from traveling to the U.S. and block access to U.S.-owned property. But they appear largely symbolic given that the officials

are unlikely to travel to or have assets or family in the West.

White House national security spokesman John Kirby said to "expect more" action later related to Navalny's death, adding that "today this just a start."

The Biden administration is levying additional sanctions as House Republicans are blocking billions of dollars in additional aid to Ukraine. The war is becoming entangled in U.S. election-year politics, with former President Donald Trump voicing skepticism about the benefits of the NATO alliance and saying that he would "encourage" Russia to "do whatever the hell they want" to countries that, in his view, are not pulling their weight in the alliance.

Biden on Friday called on Congress to pass Ukraine aid, which has stalled since House Speaker Mike Johnson blocked votes on aid passed by the Senate for Ukraine and other countries.

"Russia is taking Ukraine territory for the first time in many months," Biden said. "But here in America, the

speaker gave the house a two week vacation. They have to come back and get this done, because failure to support Ukraine in this critical moment will never be forgotten in history."

Many of the new U.S. sanctions announced Friday target Russian firms that contribute to the Kremlin's war effort — like drone and industrial chemical manufacturers and machine tool importers — as well as financial institutions, such as the state-owned operator of Russia's Mir National Payment System.

The U.S. also will impose visa restrictions on Russian authorities it says are involved in the kidnapping and confinement of Ukrainian children. In addition, 26 third-country people and firms from across China, Serbia, the United Arab Emirates, and Liechtenstein are listed for sanctions, for assisting Russia in evading existing financial penalties.

The Russian foreign ministry called the EU sanctions "illegal" and said they undermine "the international legal prerogatives of the UN Security Council." In response, the ministry is

banning some EU citizens from entering the country because they have provided military assistance to Ukraine. It did not immediately address the U.S. sanctions. Overall, since the start of the war, the U.S. Treasury and State departments have targeted more than 4,000 officials, oligarchs, firms, banks and others under Russia-related sanctions authorities. The EU asset freezes and travel bans constitute its 13th package of measures imposed by the bloc against people and organizations it suspects of undermining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

"Today, we are further tightening the restrictive measures against Russia's military and defense sector," EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said. "We remain united in our determination to dent Russia's war machine and help Ukraine win its legitimate fight for self-defense."

In all, 106 more officials and 88 "entities" — often companies, banks, government agencies or other organizations — have been added to the bloc's sanc-

tions list, bringing the tally of those targeted to more than 2,000 people and entities, including Putin and his associates.

Companies making electronic components, which the EU believes could have military as well as civilian uses, were among 27 entities accused of "directly supporting Russia's military and industrial complex in its war of aggression against Ukraine," a statement said. Those companies — some of them based in India, Sri Lanka, China, Serbia, Kazakhstan, Thailand and Turkey — face tougher export restrictions.

Some of the measures are aimed at depriving Russia of parts for pilotless drones, which are seen by military experts as key to the war.

A \$60 per barrel price cap has also been imposed on Russian oil by Group of Seven allies, intended to reduce Russia's revenues from fossil fuels.

Critics of the sanctions, price cap and other measures meant to stop Russia's invasion say they are not working fast enough.

Maria Snegovaya, a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said that primarily sanctioning Russia's defense industry and failing to cut meaningfully into Russia's energy revenues will not be enough to halt the war.

"One way or another, they will have to eventually address Russia's oil revenues and have to consider an oil embargo," Snegovaya said. "The oil price cap has effectively stopped working." Treasury Deputy Secretary Wally Adeyemo, in previewing the new sanctions, told reporters that the U.S. and its allies will not lower the price cap; "rather what we'll be doing is taking actions that will increase the cost" of Russia's production of oil.

He added that "sanctions alone are not enough to carry Ukraine to victory."

"We owe the Ukrainian people who have held on for so long the support and resources they desperately need to defend their homeland and prove Putin wrong once and for all time." □

Native American tribes gain new authority to stop unwanted hydropower projects

By MICHAEL PHILLIS
Associated Press

Federal regulators have granted Native American tribes more power to block hydropower projects on their land after a flurry of applications were filed to expand renewable energy in the water-scarce U.S. Southwest.

Previously, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission granted developers approval to move ahead with planning even if tribes objected. That practice came to an end last week. Now, a new commission policy allows tribes to quickly veto proposals, forcing businesses to cooperate with them if they want the federal government to grant exclusive rights to their hydropower projects.

"This is the acknowledgement and respect of tribal sovereignty, which is critical," said George Hardeen, spokesperson for the Navajo Nation's president's office.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission recently rejected seven proposals for projects on the Navajo Nation, which stretches 27,000 square miles (69,000 square kilometers) across Arizona, New Mexico and Utah. When it issued those rejections, the commission also announced the policy



Chris Topher Chee waits for water to fill a tank in the back of his truck to haul home in Oljato-Monument Valley, Utah, on the Navajo reservation, April 27, 2020.

Associated Press

change, handing tribes the same power as federal agencies to block projects. "It applies anywhere that a hydropower project might be proposed on tribal lands throughout the United States," said Aaron Paul, an attorney with Grand Canyon Trust, a conservation group. The Hopi Tribe, which is completely surrounded by Navajo, urged the commission to cement the policy announcement in a formal rule, worrying a different administration would be less favorable to tribes and change the policy.

The pumped hydropower

projects are essentially big batteries that generate energy when demand is high and there aren't a lot of other renewable sources like solar and wind available. Hydropower can be turned on when it is needed and works by releasing water from an upper reservoir to a lower one.

Later, when the electric grid has excess power, water is pumped in a loop back up to the higher reservoir, recharging the battery. Developers have expressed new interest in building these pumped hydropower projects as

coal-fired plants shut down in the Southwest. The canyons, towering mesas and dramatic river valleys in the area are ideal terrain because the projects require moving water between different elevations.

Environmental groups and some members of the Navajo Nation argue the projects require enormous amounts of water in a part of the country that already doesn't have enough. Roughly one-third of the 175,000 people on the Navajo Nation don't have running water at home.

People are sensitive to how

scarce water is, and "they would more likely say 'no' to these kinds of projects," Hardeen said.

Some of the proposals that were rejected came from Nature and People First. For example, the company told federal regulators it wanted to build the Black Mesa East project on the Navajo reservation in Arizona that would have two upper reservoirs with a combined capacity of 100,000 acre-feet and a single, lower reservoir with the same total storage capacity. An acre-foot of water serves two or three homes annually.

The project was proposed near a home site lease that Jheremy Young's family has held for generations. He's happy the commission blocked it. The area around the mesa is rugged, quiet and vast, and water has to be hauled in.

"That's where my dad came from, that's where his father came from," Young said. "The sentimental value of the land the story, the history were the biggest concern."

The Navajo Nation told federal regulators the company hadn't consulted with the correct tribal authorities or addressed key concerns about water use and harm to golden eagle and other species' habitats. □

Checking a bag will cost you more on United Airlines, which is copying a similar move by American

CHICAGO (AP) — United Airlines said Friday that it is raising its fees for checking bags, following a similar move earlier this week by American Airlines.

Starting with tickets booked Saturday, economy-class passengers on domestic flights will be charged \$5 more. That will bring the price to \$35 if they pay online at least 24 hours before the flight, and \$40 after that.

The fee for a second checked bag will also rise \$5, climbing to \$45 in advance online and \$50 at



Juan Chavez handles baggage as it comes off a United Airlines aircraft upon landing at George Bush Intercontinental Airport on Thursday, Dec. 21, 2023, in Houston.

Associated Press

the airport.

Passengers in premium cabins, holders of United-branded credit cards and customers with elite status in the airline's frequent-flyer program will still be able to check a bag for free, United said.

Earlier this week, American Airlines raised its fee for a first checked bag on domestic flights from \$30 to \$35 if paid in advance and to \$40 at the airport. It also hiked the fee for a second bag from \$40 to \$45. American also increased bag fees for short international

flights.

Alaska Airlines raised its bag fees for most economy passengers in January, and JetBlue followed earlier this month.

Bag fees have become a dependable source of revenue for airlines since American introduced them in 2008, when jet fuel prices were surging. In 2022, the last full year for which statistics are available, U.S. airlines took in \$6.8 billion in checked-bag fees, led by American at \$1.4 billion and United at \$1.1 billion. □

4 charged in transporting suspected Iranian-made weapons

By DENISE LAVOIE and MATTHEW BARAKAT
Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Four foreign nationals were arrested and charged Thursday with transporting suspected Iranian-made weapons on a vessel intercepted by U.S. naval forces in the Arabian Sea last month.

Two Navy SEALs died during the mission.

The criminal complaint unsealed Thursday in U.S. District Court in Richmond alleges that the four defendants who were all carrying Pakistani identification cards were transporting suspected Iranian-made missile components for the type of weapons used by Houthi rebel forces in recent attacks.

"The flow of missiles and other advanced weaponry from Iran to Houthi rebel forces in Yemen threatens the people and interests of America and our partners in the region,"

Deputy Attorney General Lisa Monaco said in a news release.

U.S. officials said that Navy Special Warfare Operator 1st Class Christopher J. Chambers was boarding the boat on Jan. 11 and slipped into the gap created by high waves be-



This undated photograph released by the U.S. military's Central Command shows what is described as Iranian-made missile components bound for Yemen's Houthi seized off a vessel in the Arabian Sea.

tween the vessel and the SEALs' combatant craft. As Chambers fell, Navy Special Warfare Operator 2nd Class Nathan Gage Ingram jumped in to try to save him, according to U.S. officials familiar with what happened.

"Two Navy SEALs tragically lost their lives in the operation that thwarted the defendants charged today from allegedly smuggling Iranian-made weapons that the Houthis could have

used to target American forces and threaten freedom of navigation and a vital artery for commerce," Monaco said.

Attorney General Merrick B. Garland pledged that the Justice Department "will use every legal authority to hold accountable those who facilitate the flow of weapons from Iran to Houthi rebel forces, Hamas, and other groups that endanger the security of the United States and

our allies."

Muhammad Pahlawan is charged with attempting to smuggle advanced missile components, including a warhead he is accused of knowing would be used by the Houthi rebels against commercial and naval vessels in the Red Sea and surrounding waters. He is also charged with providing false information to U.S. Coast Guard officers during the boarding of the vessel. Pahlawan's co-defendants

Mohammad Mazhar, Ghufuran Ullah and Izhar Muhammad were also charged with providing false information.

Pahlawan's attorney, Assistant Supervisory Federal Public Defender Amy Austin, said Pahlawan had an initial appearance in U.S. District Court Thursday and is scheduled to be back in court Tuesday for a detention hearing. She declined to comment on the case.

"Right now, he's just charged with two crimes and we're just at the very beginning stages, and so all we know is what's in the complaint," Austin said when reached by phone Thursday.

According to prosecutors, Navy forces boarded a small, unflagged vessel, described as a dhow, and encountered 14 people on the ship on the night of Jan. 11, in the Arabian Sea off the Somali coast.

Navy forces searched the dhow and found what prosecutors say was Iranian-made weapons, including components for medium range ballistic missiles and anti-ship cruise missiles. All 14 sailors on the dhow were brought onto the USS Lewis B. Puller after Navy forces determined the dhow was not seaworthy.

Judge to hold hearing Monday considering detention of ex-FBI source accused of lying about Bidens

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER
Associated Press

A federal judge in California will consider whether a former FBI informant charged with lying about a multimillion-dollar bribery scheme involving President Joe Biden's family must remain behind bars while he awaits trial after prosecutors pushed to have him locked up over fears that he would flee the country. U.S. Magistrate Judge Daniel Albregts in Las Vegas earlier this week allowed Alexander Smirnov to be released from jail on electronic GPS monitoring. But U.S. District Judge Otis Wright II ordered Smirnov to be returned to custody after prosecutors asked

Wright to reconsider the earlier ruling releasing him. Wright has set a hearing for Monday in Los Angeles on prosecutors' request to keep Smirnov in jail. Smirnov was returned to custody Thursday morning while meeting with his lawyers at their offices in downtown Las Vegas.

After ordering Smirnov's re-arrest, Wright wrote in court papers unsealed Friday that it had come to his attention that defense attorneys were again pushing for Smirnov's release in Nevada which the judge added was "likely to facilitate his absconding from the United States."

Smirnov's lawyers said in a statement Friday that they

were continuing to fight for his release and would have no further comment on the case. They have filed an emergency petition with the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, arguing that Wright did not have the authority to order that Smirnov be re-arrested and brought to Los Angeles.

Prosecutors have accused Smirnov of falsely telling his FBI handler that executives from the Ukrainian energy company Burisma had paid President Biden and Hunter Biden \$5 million each around 2015. The claim became central to the Republican impeachment inquiry of President Biden in Congress.

Smirnov has not entered a plea to the charges, but his lawyers have said their cli-

ent is presumed innocent and they look forward to defending him at trial. □



Former FBI informant Alexander Smirnov, second from right, leaves the courthouse on Feb. 20, 2024, in Las Vegas.

Associated Press

Israel plans to build 3,300 new settlement homes

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel plans to build more than 3,300 new homes in settlements in the Israeli-occupied West Bank in response to a fatal Palestinian shooting attack, a senior Cabinet minister said. The decision drew an angry response from the U.S. at a time of growing tensions over the course of Israel's war on Hamas in the Gaza Strip. Israel's finance minister, far-right firebrand Bezalel Smotrich, announced the new settlement plans late Thursday, after three Palestinian gunmen opened fire on cars near the Maale Adumim settlement, killing one Israeli and wounding five.

"The serious attack on Ma'ale Adumim must have a determined security response but also a settlement response," Smotrich wrote on X, formerly Twitter. "Our enemies know that any harm to us will lead to more construction and more development and more of our hold all over the country."

He said Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and De-



Relatives of Matan Elmaliach, 26, react during his funeral in the West Bank settlement of Maale Adumim, Thursday, Feb. 22, 2024.

fense Minister Yoav Gallant participated in the discussion. The decision will put in motion approval processes for 300 new homes in the Kedar settlement and 2,350 in Maale Adumim. It will also advance previously approved construction of nearly 700 homes in Efrat.

Once the war in Gaza is over, the Biden administra-

tion seeks eventual Palestinian governance in Gaza and the West Bank as a precursor to Palestinian statehood. It's an outcome opposed by Netanyahu and his right-wing government and pushed farther from view, advocates say, as new settlement plans are advanced.

U.S. Secretary of State Ant-

ony Blinken said he was "disappointed" to hear of the Israeli announcement.

"It's been longstanding U.S. policy under Republican and Democratic administrations alike that new settlements are counterproductive to reaching an enduring peace," he said in Buenos Aires. "They're also inconsistent with inter-

national law. Our administration maintains a firm opposition to settlement expansion and in our judgement this only weakens, it doesn't strengthen, Israel's security."

The comments reversed the Trump administration's position that settlements did not violate international law. That stance, announced by then-Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, broke with four decades of U.S. policy.

Consecutive Israeli governments have expanded settlements in east Jerusalem and the West Bank, war-won territories the Palestinians seek for a future state, along with Gaza. Construction has accelerated under Netanyahu's current right-wing government, which includes settlers, including Smotrich, in key positions. □

"Instead of acting in order to prevent future horrible attacks such as of yesterday, the government of Israel is acting to deepen the conflict and the tensions," said Hagit Ofran, from Israeli settlement watchdog group Peace Now. □

Associated Press

Rape and sexual violence in Sudan's ongoing conflict may amount to war crimes, a new U.N. report says

By **JAMEY KEATEN**

Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — The U.N. human rights office said in a new report Friday that scores of people, including children, have been subjected to rape and other forms of sexual violence in the ongoing conflict in Sudan, assaults that may amount to war crimes.

Sudan plunged into chaos in mid-April when clashes erupted in the capital, Khartoum, between rival Sudanese forces the country's military, led by Gen. Abdel Fattah Burhan, and a paramilitary faction known as the Rapid Support Forces, under the command of Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo.

The fighting quickly spread across the African country, especially urban areas but also the restive western Darfur region, and has

so far killed at least 12,000 people and sent over 8 million fleeing their homes, the report said.

The report, which covers a period from the outbreak of the fighting up to Dec. 15, documents abuses in a country that has been largely inaccessible to aid groups and rights monitors recently, clouding the impact of a conflict that been overshadowed by wars in places like Gaza and Ukraine.

The report found that at least 118 people had been subjected to sexual violence, including rape with many of the assaults committed by members of the paramilitary forces, in homes and on the streets. One woman, the U.N. said, "was held in a building and repeatedly gang-raped over a period of 35 days." The report also pointed to

recruitment of child soldiers on both sides of the conflict.

"Some of these violations would amount to war crimes," said U.N. human rights chief Volker Türk, calling for prompt, thorough and independent investigations into alleged rights abuses and violations.

The report is based on interview of more than 300 victims and witnesses, some conducted in neighboring Ethiopia and Chad where many Sudanese have fled, along with analysis of photographs, videos, and satellite imagery from the conflict areas.

The ravages of the war, beyond the period examined, are continuing, the U.N. said.

The U.N. cited video that emerged last week from the country's North Kordofan State showing men

wearing Sudanese army uniforms carrying severed heads of members of the rival paramilitary faction.

"For nearly a year now, accounts coming out of Sudan have been of death, suffering and despair, as

the senseless conflict and human rights violations and abuses have persisted with no end in sight," Türk said.

"The guns must be silenced, and civilians must be protected," he added. □



People board a truck as they leave Khartoum, Sudan, on June 19, 2023.

Associated Press

The collapse of a gold mine in Venezuela underscores the dangers of a poorly regulated industry

By REGINA GARCIA CANO
Associated Press

LA PARAGUA, Venezuela (AP) — Osvaldo Romero and his wife got off a battered boat Friday under the scorching sun of central Venezuela and walked up the bank of a river barefoot, their pants soaking wet and eyes showing the shock of having faced days earlier one of the country's deadliest mining disasters.

He carried a few belongings they had wrapped with plastic and rope, and as residents of the community of La Paragua approached him, he said he regretted having worked at the remote mine where greed and callousness were king and queen.

"That is the worst mine I have ever worked in," said Romero, who has been a miner for 10 years. He had been working at the collapsed Bulla Loca mine until Thursday, when he and his wife, without any money or gold to show for their hard work since January, hopped on the boat.

"They were removing the injured from the rubble, and they were still taking gold out. That's unconscionable," he said.

The collapse of the open-pit gold mine that killed at least 16 people has underscored the dangers of working in a poorly regulated in-



Women carry babies after arriving by boat from La Bulla Loca mine, which collapsed, in La Paragua, Bolivar state, Venezuela, Friday, Feb. 23, 2024.

dustry. But it has also shown the crucial role that mining plays in the survival of thousands of people who take a gamble and create quasi-cities, complete with bingo and raffles, around mines in hopes of earning what other parts of the troubled country cannot give them. Venezuela's government does not have an accurate count of people who were living at the site of the mine, but several miners who have worked there estimate that at least 3,000 people, including children, were in Bulla Loca at any given time since Decem-

ber.

On Thursday, several privately operated boats arrived in La Paragua with people who had given up on their dreams of gold. Among them was a 2-week-old baby boy who was born at the mine.

The community that formed around the mine includes clothing stores, restaurants, convenience stores and an evangelical church all built out of wood and tarps. Some stores also sell metered WiFi.

Businesses organize bingo nights with televisions and loudspeakers as on-site

prizes as well as raffles with motorcycles and cars as grand prizes that must be picked up in La Paragua. Alcohol though is banned. Food and other items are priced in gold and so are transportation costs to and from the mine. After Tuesday's disaster, some boat operators were charging 2 grams of gold per person each way. That's about \$80, given the lower quality of Bulla Loca's gold compared to that of other Venezuelan mines.

Some of those returning to La Paragua Thursday brought back 2-liter soda

bottles, bags of rice and flour and canned goods. They also brought back the shovels they used at work. Without tiny pieces of gold in their pockets, some lined up under a military tent where volunteers with a local church handed out oatmeal and cachitos, a Venezuelan savory pastry. "We left out of fear and brought back nothing. Nothing," Dairely Ruiz said. "We haven't even eaten since yesterday."

As Ruiz and others continued to arrive, Angel Marciano, the governor of the state of Bolivar, where the mine is located, said the number of deaths in the tragedy remained at 16, which miners and area residents consider an undercount in part because Indigenous people who lost relatives in the collapse are retrieving their bodies and burying them in their remote communities without notifying the government. Manuel Tirado, an Indigenous man of the Colibrí community, told The Associated Press he lost his son and son-in-law in the collapse. Neither was taken to a morgue or buried in the cemetery in La Paragua. "I took him out of the mine and buried him in my community," Tirado said of his son Reynaldo. □

Associated Press

London police confirm that body recovered from river was that of chemical attack suspect Abdul Ezedi

LONDON (AP) — London police confirmed Friday that a body they pulled from the River Thames is that of Abdul Ezedi, a man wanted over a chemical attack that injured his former partner and her two young daughters.

The Metropolitan Police said his body was formally identified on Thursday and that his family has been informed of this development.

The force also said that a post-mortem has confirmed his cause of death as drowning.

"As the public would expect, our enquiries continue into this atrocious attack," said Commander Jon Savell. "The 31-year-old woman is still in hospital and remains in a stable condition and no longer sedated. We have still not been able to speak to her but hope to as soon as she is well enough."

Police launched a nationwide manhunt for Ezedi after the attack in the Clapham area of south London on Jan. 31 that saw the mother-of-two doused with a corrosive

alkali. Some of the chemical injured her 8-year-old daughter, while the 3-year-old had her head slammed into the ground.

Images of Ezedi soon after showed he had significant injuries to the right side of his face, but his whereabouts were unknown.

On Feb. 9, the Met said they believed Ezedi had probably "gone into the water" after piecing together closed-circuit television footage of his movements after the attack.

The Met said the crew of a passing boat reported

seeing a body in the water near the Tower of London on Monday afternoon and that they believed it was Ezedi.

British media reported that Ezedi is an Afghan refugee who was granted asylum despite being convicted of a sex offense in Britain in 2018.

His asylum application was initially rejected, but he later was permitted to remain in the U.K. after claiming that he had converted to Christianity, the Daily Telegraph newspaper reported. □



This is an undated handout photo issued by the Metropolitan Police of Abdul Ezedi.

Associated Press

Aruba's underwater wonderland

ORANJESTAD - Exploring the underwater wonders is something you should definitely do during your stay in Aruba. The underwater world has everything to offer that makes a snorkel trip so exceptional; an impressive, colorful sea life with exotic fishes, turtles and beautiful coral reef. The historic shipwrecks, located on the Aruban seabed are also worth a visit. Aruba is known for its white beaches and blue oceans, which means there are many fascinating under water spots, where you can take your snorkeling gear and we selected the top spots for you.

Tres Trapi

Tres Trapi means tree steps in Papiamentu, Papiamentu is together with Dutch the official language spoken on Aruba. The beach is called Tres Trapi because it is accessible by the tree steps carved into the rocks. Tres Trapi is a small rocky beach, located on the north-western side of the island, approximately 5 to 10 minute drive from Palm Beach. From the unique steps you can easily walk over the beach into the clear and turquoise blue ocean. While snorkeling you will encounter all kind of tropical fishes and sea stars. The kind of starfish you will find in the Aruban waters is the red cushion sea star. This is a starfish that is commonly found in the shallow waters of the Caribbean sea and if you are lucky during your snorkeling visit to Tres Trapi, you may come across one of the green sea turtles. Respect the animal, keep your distance and enjoy the view. Also remember; it is a once in a life time experience.

Antilla shipwreck

Antilla is a 400-foot-long long ship, built in 1939 in Hamburg, Germany. Antilla came to Aruba, because it had to find a neutral port. When Germany invaded the Netherlands on May 10, 1940, the crew decided to let their own ship sink, to prevent it from falling into the hands of the Dutch Navy. Antilla lies on its portside in Malmok bay, and the sunken war ship is now one of Aruba's most popular snorkeling and dive spots. However, the ship wreck can only be reached by boat. The ship is visible from the surface and during your snorkeling trip you be surrounded by hundreds of tropical fishes, but the ship wreck alone is already impressive enough.

Baby Beach

Baby beach; a white beach, with a crystal blue ocean. The beach is located on the southern part of the island. On the way to the famous beach, you will drive through the old capital of Aruba, San Nicolas. The old Aruban culture can be still felt and experienced here, so do not hesitate to get out of your car and walk around for a while. Baby beach is a child friendly beach, since it is shallow and the water has a pleasant temperature. The name therefore fits well with the beach. Baby beach is an excellent beach for snorkeling, especially if you want to go with small children, because the water remains shallow and there are still many underwater wonders to see. In the ocean there is an area marked until where it is recommended to snorkel and on the beach you will find different facilities. It is a perfect beach to spend your day snorkeling and relaxing.

Mangel Halto

Mangel Halto beach is located in Savaneta, on the southern-west part



of the island. The beach is different from the other beaches in Aruba; it is beach full of mangroves. You reach the beach by a bridge through the mangroves and then you will have several entrances to the sea. There are diverse spots where you can enjoy a perfect beach day, wooden stairs made to enter the water and a dock to sit on and enjoy the view. Mangel Halto is also worth a visit for the snorkeling experience. Inside the bay, the water is clear and you find many colorful fish. Outside the bay is a bit more challenging for beginners because of the wind and the waves, but the coral is alive and it is just like snorkel heaven. □

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**Lessons from our elders:
 Plants and fruits for medicinal use**



(Oranjestad)—Though western medicine is now widely used for common illnesses and to keep our bodies healthy and happy, it is still very common in every household in Aruba (and around the world) to have staple home remedies that is passed on through generations. Here are some tips that our elders have passed on to us over the years.

Pineapple

Pineapple has more uses

than topping it on your Christmas ham. According to elders, the skin of a pineapple is great to use to refresh your body. Clean the skin thoroughly and make tea or warapa* with it. It is said that this tea can also be drank after an operation on the ovaries or uterus. This gets rid of irritation and inflammation.

When the fruit is unripe and green, this can be used to stimulate menstruation flow in women. This also stimulates the passing kidney stones. When ripe, the fruit can be used for poisoning in the gut and can help treat rheumatic diseases, like arthritis.

However, breastfeeding women who cannot produce much milk are advised not to consume too pineapple, and people with acid reflux are recommended to not consume any pineapple at all.

Arrowroot

Arrowroot is native to tropical America and can be sold as a powder or whole. It is said that you can take arrowroot powder and make a "shalup" (porridge) for stomach pain or when you're feeling weak. You can make it with milk too, but it is advised to best use just water. You can also add prunes for a bit of sweetness. Arrowroot shalup is also good to treat an

unhealthy gut or for diarrhea.

To make arrowroot shalup, boil a bit of water and add one tablespoon of arrowroot powder and stir continuously until you reach porridge consistency. If you make a shalup with milk, add a pinch of salt. Raw arrowroot powder can be used to powder babies.

Eggplant/Aubergine

Eggplants, or aubergines, are easy to find in supermarkets around the world and can be grown all year round on the island. Related to potato and tomato, eggplants are good to calm nerves. It can also be used to lower blood pres-

sure, by steeping its leaves in boiled water and drinking it. You can also make eggplant juice to help purify your blood. However, do make sure to drink slowly; let it mix with your spit and then swallow.

Eggplant kataplan* can also be used to treat skin tumors, abscesses and hemorrhoids. Eggplant kataplan can also be used externally to treat arthritis.

*warapa: term referring to a water and sugar solution, a.k.a simple syrup.

*kataplan: porridge-like mixture used externally for wounds or parts of the body that are painful or swollen.

Aruba Tourism Authority honors loyal visitors at the Marriott's Aruba Ocean Club!

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing Goodwill Ambassadors of Aruba. These visitors were respectively honored with certificates acknowledging their years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.

The honor certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

The three honoring levels are as follows:

- Distinguished Visitor (10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)
- Goodwill Ambassador (20>years

consecutively visiting Aruba)
 Emerald Ambassador (35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

The honorees were:

Goodwill Ambassadors of Aruba
 Mr. Joseph & Mrs. Carol Quattrociochi from Delaware, United States

Goodwill Ambassadors of Aruba
 Mr. Brian & Mrs. Sandra Backensto from New Jersey United States

Ms. Marouska Heyliger representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of the Marriott's Aruba Ocean Club bestowed the Goodwill Ambassador certifications to the honorees, presented them with gifts, and also thanked

them for choosing Aruba as their favorite destination, as their home away from home.

Top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by the Quattrociochi's were:

- Aruba's white sand
- Aruba's consistently beautiful weather
- Aruba's nice beaches and turquoise waters
- "Aruba is our home away from from"
- Aruba's wonderful people who are genuinely nice

Top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by the Backensto's were: "Friends we have made over the years"

Aruba's sun
 "The ease of communication by the fact that everyone speaks English"
 "Things to do"
 Aruba's restaurants

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honorees for their continued visits to the "One Happy Island".



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Prohibited by law: leaving the island with seashells, white sand or corals

(Oranjestad)—Often times, the customs department at the airport intercepts many tourists leaving the island with seashells, white sand and/or corals as souvenirs.

Conforming to the international treaty of CITES and our local law which protects our Flora & Fauna, it is absolutely prohibited to take any seashell, sand and coral outside of Aruba. This is to protect our environment. The high number of seashells, coral and amount of sand con-

fiscated is very strange and it is suspected that our own locals are the ones selling these to the tourists, which is unacceptable.

Upon confiscation at the airport, you can also face a fine that they have to pay before leaving. This is surely not a pleasant experience for the tourist. This also leads to a negative reaction which can put our tourism in a negative light.

Though we love to accommodate our visitors, let's all

give nature the respect it deserves by protecting our environment. Stop collecting seashells, white sand and corals from our shores and stop buying or accepting these from local sellers or companies.

We want our future generations and visitors to enjoy the beauty of our beaches, shells and corals in a sustainable way, without destroying or disrupting the Aruban ecosystem. Help us protect what is ours!



Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors at Marriott's Surf Club!



The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing Goodwill Ambassadors of Aruba. These honorees were respectively honored with a certificate acknowledging their years of visits, loyalty, and love for the is-

land of Aruba.

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- Emerald Ambassador (35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

The honorees were:

Goodwill Ambassadors Mr. Jack & Mrs. Patti Hennessey from Massachusetts, United States

Ms. Marouska Heyliger rep-

resenting the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of the Marriott's Surf Club bestowed the certificate to the honorees, presented them with memorable gifts, and also thanked them for choosing Aruba as their best-loved vacation destination, as their home-away-from-home.

Top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by the honorees were:
 Aruba's warm weather
 Aruba's friendly people
 Aruba's beautiful clean beaches
 Aruba's shopping experience
 Aruba's restaurants

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honorees for their continued visits to the "One Happy Island".



Article by Etnia Nativa
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 Etnia Nativa is close to high rise Hotels



A Ceramic Identity

Episode CV – 105

Many ceramic designs series were found by archaeologists. These unique decorations define an epoch, a cultural identity and nations heritage. In Aruba's case, islands Caquetian ancestors developed an original style classified as Dabajuroide by prehistory studios, named after the nearby city of Dabajuro, City and municipality in Southwestern Falcón State of Venezuelan.

The Dabajuro style is among the most complex works made in this region, influencing a former territory covering parts of North Western Venezuela including our ABC islands. Classical designs were made in red, black or white, but various forms of incision, stippling, and 3D works with applications were also created. Another peculiar and important category are the very large vessels, showing great technical skills in their elaboration. These have been found in association with burials, but most probably they were also used intensively in everyday life to store large quantities of liquids, seeds and roots. All pots and vessels are formed by hand (no use of potter's wheel) in a coiling technique. The clay is tempered with crushed quartz particles.

The larger size vessels demonstrate the mastery and Excellency of the Dabajuro potters: it is difficult to fire such a large vessel in a simple oven: as soon as temperature differences develop within the oven, such vessels will crack. The decorated pottery is thinner and of a very fine quality. Two main decoration techniques have been used, painted designs and applique modelling. The painted parts are mainly darker as compared to the lighter-background or color of the vessel. Colors as brown, reddish brown, red and

black were used. The other decoration technique is modelling.

Ranging from simple motifs as corrugated rims, extra applique rings around the rim of the vessel, also complicated ones such as interpreting stylized animal heads, like frogs, bats, birds, turtles etc. Human heads, anthropomorphic effigy, vessels and complete stylized animals were also produced. It is evident that pottery was very important for islands sedentary Amerindians of the Ceramic Period. It was not only used for different daily uses, as mentioned above, but it also was used in burial practices, agro-religious as well as shamanic ceremonies. We conclude from this evidence that it had a very important place in the preparation of food and the ritual, symbolic, and religious life of the tribe. Designs that had inspired local artist as rock art and Dabajuro designs and folk stories.

To get to know more over Aruba's and its origins, its animals and culture, we highly recommend you to book your visit for our renowned cultural encounter session has been entertaining curious participants for decades. Mail us at etnianativa03@gmail.com or WhatsApp 297 592 2702 to confirm your participation. Our facilities and activities take place close to high rise hotels.



The Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins and its history

(Oranjestad)—The Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins is one of the most visited places by tourists on the island, as it lies along the northern coast line near the mini pool and on the way to the Natural Bridge. Despite its seemingly plain appearance, this ruin represents one of the most important histories of the island: The Aruban Gold Rush.

Built in 1872 by English company Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd, the gold mill at Bushiribana was constructed in the area



where most gold was found by locals. The story of gold on Aruba actually dates back to 1725, when a first exploration for gold on the island was commissioned by the Dutch West India Company. Under the leadership of Mr. Paulus Printz, a three-year search was conducted on Aruba, to no avail. Though they found some gold, it was enough to motivate a further search, and the assignment was discontinued by Printz himself.

It wasn't until 100 years later, in 1824, when a young boy found a lump of gold while out herding his father's sheep. His father took it to a local merchant who then sold the lump for \$70. Unbeknownst to the boy and his father, they quite literally struck gold, and as word got out, a gold fever spread among the locals who started searching for more gold. About 25 pounds worth was found.

At the same time, the Aruban government took immediate actions, and informed Curacao that gold was found. At first, everyone

could look for gold, as long as they sold it to the government. However, after some time, the government decided to implement stricter rules and banned local search parties.

Over the years, concession-holding had seen different companies from around the world, all of which used primitive methods to dig and carve out gold from the rocks. Aruba Island Gold Mining Company Ltd. was no different, but used a unique method that involved grinding the rocks and letting the dust be blown away by the strong northeast wind, leaving clumps of gold behind. The next step was melting the gold and letting it attach to quicksilver in order to obtain pure gold. All these processes were done at the Bushiribana Gold Mill.

The gold mill itself had a short life-span: only 10 years in service, but its structure remained relatively solid till this day, and is now a historical remnant.

Sources: Etnia Nativa & goldmineranch.com.

Short history of the beginnings of baseball in Aruba

ORANJESTAD — Baseball was played on the island of Aruba in the 1930's, but only by United States expatriates working for LAGO and living inside the LAGO colony. Jim Bluejacket, the legendary US Indian who had played in two major league teams, worked for LAGO during 14 years and was a key factor in the growth of the popularity of the game in the colony. There is no record of Bluejacket ever playing outside the colony.

Outside the colony, the game of baseball was introduced to Aruba by Venezuelan immigrants and sailors on the Venezuelan fishing boats that used Aruba as their home port. They formed pick-up teams and played games on Sundays on an open field behind what is now the Court of Justice. One of the Venezuelans that comes to mind is Felix Garrido, grandfather of our current Prime-Minister.

In the late 30s the leader of this group was Raúl Aparicio, a cousin of Luis Aparicio who is now enshrined in the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown. The Aparicios were evidently very good at sports. Raúl had two brothers who also played baseball, René and Roman. Rosendo, his only brother who did not play baseball became a professional soccer player in the Venezuelan league. Rosendo was nicknamed "Cabeza de oro" (golden head) for

a memorable header he scored to win a game for his team.

Interestingly, it was in Aruba that Luis Aparicio played his first game outside of Venezuela. This took place in 1950 when he played shortstop for the school he attended. Later he played for "Cabimas" in a double-header of the Venezuelan Western League. These official games of the league were authorized to be played in Aruba by the Professional Baseball Organization of Venezuela. Several others who played in those games have also been enshrined.

Luis Aparicio's father was the super popular Luis "El Grande" (the great one) after whom the baseball stadium in Maracaibo is named. He and his brother owned the professional baseball teams "Gavilanes" which later became the "Aguilas", and the "Cabimas".

In the early '40s, another group, mostly immigrants from the Dominican Republic also became very active with pickup teams. Some of these remained active in baseball well into the early '50s; as umpires, managers even as players. Among these were Nestor "Pantín" Guerrero who also had a musical band. Perhaps not so coincidentally, many of Pantín's players were also musicians. Luthai Pantophlet who umpired many years was a well-

known drummer. Gaston Hazel was a bongo player; José Bryson and the brothers Nicholson, Teddy and Julio, all played several instruments.

In San Nicolas, baseball was played on the grounds next to where the LAGO Sport Park (now Laveist Sport Park) was officially inaugurated in March 1941.

During the WWII years, baseball got a big lift from the influx of Puerto Rican and US soldiers stationed here. As LAGO was playing a very important role in the struggle against Hitler, it was able to get all the sports equipment needed here to allow more people to participate.

In the '40s only the Lago Sports Park organized baseball championship games. The first teams to participate were Artraco, (Aruba Trading Co.), Esso Garage and Botica San Lucas. In 1945 Venezuelan employees of the Lago refinery participated under the name of "Cafenol", a very popular Venezuelan coffee brand. Two other groups of Venezuelan immigrants formed the teams "Cerveceria" (named after the iconic team Cerveceria Caracas), and "Venezuela", although not all members of these teams were Venezuelans. This was also the year that the team sponsored by Roxy Café started to play as "Dodgers".

Dodgers became the dominant baseball powerhouse till the 1950s.

Other teams that entered the baseball scene in the late 1940s: Pepsi Cola (Oranjestad) and St. Thomas Boys (former students of St. Thomas College, Oranjestad). "Baby Ruth" in San Nicolas played initially under the name "Camel" and "Barnes' Ramblers" the only team consisting of Lago Colony players to participate in the Lago Sport Park championships. "Red Rock Cola" was formed in Oranjestad in 1950.

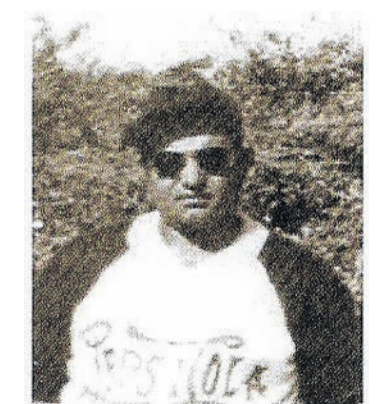
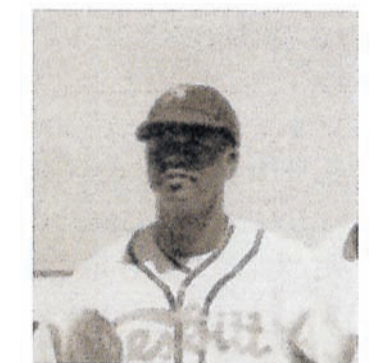
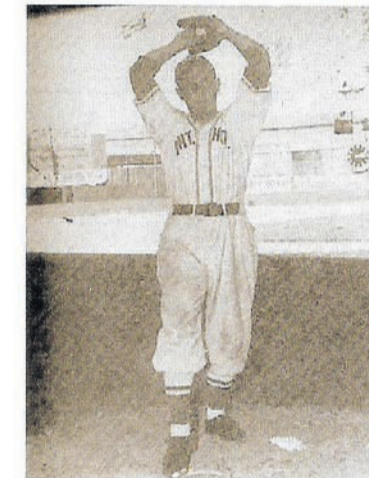
In 1952 the team Pepsi

Cola became "Nesbitt's" and had players of seven countries, including two American expats from Lago Colony.

In 1950 a group of prominent members of the Aruba community founded the Amateur Baseball Bond of Aruba (ABBA) to give structure to the management of the sport and became the organizers of official championship games. While maintaining the existing teams in a league that was referred to as A-class, ABBA established a B-class league in which the "Budweiser" and "Braves" played the first years.

By 1952 Aruba became a member of the International Amateur Baseball Association and fielded a team managed by Joe Proterra, (former pitcher of "Barnes' Ramblers"), that would play for the first time ever in the Amateur Baseball World Series that took place in Havana, Cuba in September. Surprisingly, Aruba won two of its six games and became the darling of the Havana fans. Nell Harms of the Aruban team was named the "Outstanding player of the week" for his performance against Honduras. He allowed just two hits, struck out 15 and hit the only homerun of the game. Joe Cambria, the famous scout for the Washington Senators offered him a contract, but Nel was not interested, but the next year, at the Amateur Baseball World Series in Caracas, Venezuela, Nel and Ruben Phillips did sign and in 1954 they played professional baseball the Georgia-Florida League and the Texas-New Mexico League. They were the first Arubans to play professionally, but not the only ones.

During the games in Havana, contacts were made with the organizers of Little League Baseball in Cuba which eventually resulted in the introduction of Little League in Aruba. Little League of Aruba has been



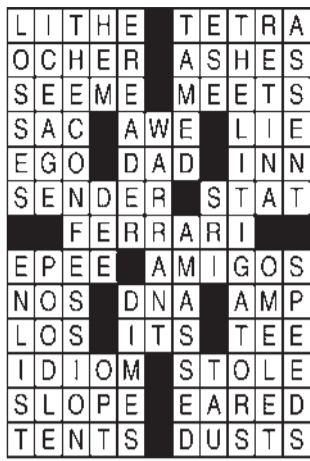
extremely successful: It has produced many players who earned baseball scholarships at universities in the United States, a few who played professionally in the Netherlands and different countries in the Caribbean and five who reached the major leagues: Calvin Maduro, Eugene Kingsale, Radhames Dijkhoff, Sydney Ponson, and Xander Bogaerts one of the brightest stars of Boston Red Sox.

Written by Mr. Clyde Harms

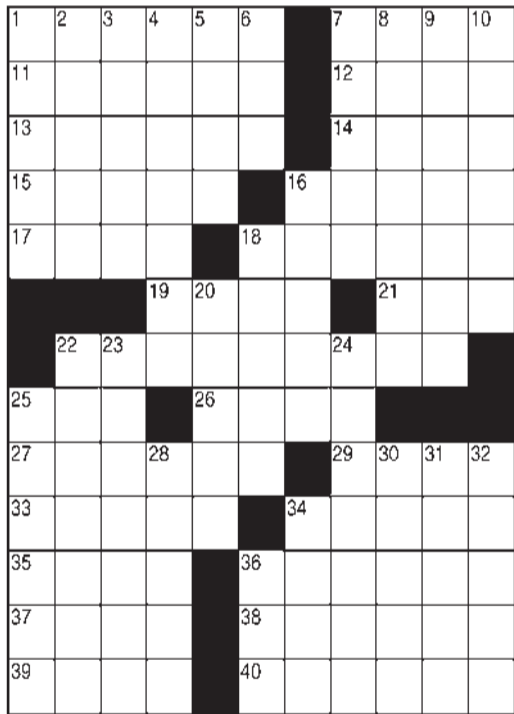
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By THOMAS JOSEPH

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 reddener attire
 11 Each 39 Tattered
 12 Ticked off
 13 Tell
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 19 Canyon 7 Block- 22 Battle site digs
 sound heads of 1945 34 Top pick,
 21 Museum 8 Jazz 23 Oats informally
 focus legend holder 36 Texas's
 22 Focused, Ornette 24 Satellite Houston



Yesterday's answer



2-24

A XYDLBAAXR
 is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

2-24

CRYPTOQUOTE

MBFBYT DVN CUCQ PCVNEQCY,
 CUCM HBCLN, DBG PEAD V
 DCVQL AVM DBKY. — SCKYV
 ZXLSJCQVKY

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: ISN'T IT NICE TO THINK THAT TOMORROW IS A NEW DAY

Reddit strikes \$60M deal allowing Google to train AI models on its posts, unveils IPO plans

By DAVID HAMILTON
 AP Technology Reporter
 SAN FRANCISCO (AP) —

Reddit has struck a deal with Google that allows the search giant to use posts from the online discussion site for training its artificial intelligence models and to improve services such as Google Search. The arrangement, announced Thursday and valued at roughly \$60 million, will also give Reddit access to Google AI models for improving its internal site search and other features. Reddit declined to comment or answer questions beyond its written statement about the deal. Separately, the San Francisco-based company announced plans for its initial public offering Wednesday. In documents filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, Reddit said it reported net income of \$18.5 million its first profit in two years in the October-



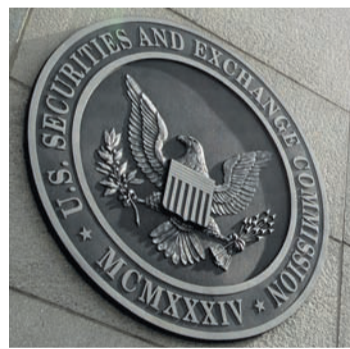
This June 29, 2020 file photo shows the Reddit logo on a mobile device in New York.

Associated Press

December quarter on revenue of \$249.8 million. The company said it aims to list its shares on the New York Stock Exchange under the ticker symbol RDDL. The Google deal is a big step for Reddit, which relies on volunteer moderators to run its sprawling array of freewheeling topic-based discussions. Those moderators have publicly protested earlier Reddit decisions, most recently blacking out much of the site for days

when Reddit announced plans to start charging many third-party apps for access to its content. The arrangement with Google doesn't presage any sort of data-driven changes to how Reddit functions, according to an individual familiar with the matter. This person requested anonymity in order to speak freely during the SEC-enforced "quiet period" that precedes an IPO. □

A work-from-home tip: Don't buy stocks after eavesdropping on your spouse's business calls



The seal of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission is affixed on a wall at SEC headquarters, June 19, 2015, in Washington.

Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — A word to the wise: If you overhear your work-from-home spouse talking business, just forget anything you may learn from it. And most definitely do not trade stocks using what authorities will almost certainly view as inside information. Tyler Loudon, a 42-year-old Houston man, learned this lesson the hard way. He pleaded guilty Thursday to securities fraud for buying and selling stocks based on details gleaned from his wife's busi-

ness conversations while both were working from home. He made \$1.7 million in profits from the deal, but has agreed to forfeit those gains. Things might have turned out differently had Loudon or his wife decided to work from, well, the office. Loudon's wife worked as a mergers and acquisition manager at the London-based oil and gas conglomerate BP. So when Loudon overheard details of a BP plan to acquire a truck stop and travel center company based in Ohio, he smelled profit. He bought more than 46,000 shares of the truck stop company before the merger was announced in February 2023, at which point the stock soared almost 71%, according to the Securities and Exchange Commission. □

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Lander 'alive and well' after company scores first U.S. moon landing since Apollo era

By MARCIA DUNN
AP Aerospace Writer
CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — The moon's newest arrival was said to be "alive and well" a day after making the first U.S. landing in half a century, but flight controllers were still trying to get a better handle on its bearings.

Intuitive Machines reported Friday that it's communicating with its lander, Odysseus, and sending commands to acquire science data. But it noted: "We continue to learn more about the vehicle's specific information" regarding location, overall health and positioning.

The Houston company was shooting for the south polar region, near the Malapert A crater, closer to the pole than anyone else so NASA could scout out the area before astronauts show up later this decade.

With Thursday's touchdown, Intuitive Machines became the first private business to pull off a moon landing, a feat previously achieved by only five countries. The mission was sponsored in large part by NASA, whose experiments were on board. NASA paid \$118 million for the delivery under a program meant to jump-start the lunar economy.

One of the NASA experi-



This image provided by Intuitive Machines shows its Odysseus lunar lander over the near side of the moon following lunar orbit insertion, Wednesday, Feb. 21, 2024.

Associated Press

ments was pressed into service when the lander's navigation system failed in the final few hours before touchdown. The lander took an extra lap around the moon to allow time for the last-minute switch to NASA's laser system.

"Odie is a scrapper," mission director Tim Crain said late Thursday via X, formerly Twitter.

Another experiment, a cube with four cameras, was supposed to pop off 30 seconds before touchdown to capture pictures of Odysseus' landing. But Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University's EagleCam was deliberately powered

off during the final descent because of the navigation switch and stayed attached to the lander. Embry-Riddle's Troy Henderson said his team will try to release EagleCam in

the coming days, so it can photograph the lander from roughly 26 feet (8 meters) away.

With lingering uncertainty over Odysseus' position on the moon, "getting that final picture of the lander on the surface is still an incredibly important task for us," Henderson told The Associated Press. □



Marriott Aruba Surf Club PLATINUM SEASON

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- 2 Bed Oceanside \$19,000
- 2 Bed Ocean view \$22,000
- 2 Bed Garden view \$15,000
- 3 Bed Ocean view \$30,000
- WK 51 Ocean view \$65,000
- WK 52 Ocean View \$65,000
- WK 7 and 14 - all views

GOLD SEASON

- 2 Bed Oceanfront \$18,000
- 2 Bed Oceanside \$9,750
- 2 Bed Ocean view \$9,000
- 2 Bed Garden view \$7,000
- 3 Bed Ocean view \$16,500

Marriott Aruba Ocean Club PLATINUM SEASON

- 2 Bed Oceanfront \$36,000
- 2 Bed Ocean view \$27,000
- 1 Bed Ocean front \$22,000
- 1 Bed Ocean View \$17,500

GOLD SEASON

- 2 Bed Oceanfront \$18,000
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Mike Tyson, Francis Ngannou set for Professional Fighters League debut in Saudi Arabia

By **DAN GELSTON**
AP Sports Writer

Mike Tyson and Francis Ngannou are in Saudi Arabia, a pair of ferocious heavyweights with an eye on the championship belt. For Tyson, his role is ceremonial. The retired boxing great is set to present the winner of three title fights in the inaugural PFL vs. Bellator: Champs card with a custom championship belt. For Ngannou, it's personal. The former UFC heavyweight champion says he'll attend the bouts to confront the winner of the heavyweight superfight between Renan Ferreira and Ryan Bader. Ngannou could finally make his Professional Fighters League debut some time this year against Ferreira or Bader.

Tyson and Ngannou are on hand for the defining card in PFL's five-plus year history.

The MMA promotion that has churned through Olympic champions and UFC retreads now has its strongest roster yet for its first pay-per-view show that pits Bellator champs against PFL's champs on Saturday in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. PFL purchased Bellator from Paramount Global in November in its boldest at-



Former heavyweight boxing champion Mike Tyson stands on the field before an NFL football game between the Las Vegas Raiders and the Pittsburgh Steelers Sunday, Sept. 24, 2023, in Las Vegas.

tempt yet to make a run at the industry leader, UFC.

It's also the first major MMA card held in Saudi Arabia. PFL is the only organization in MMA with a sports-season format, where fighters compete in a regular season, playoffs, and championship each year.

"We are the innovative, aggressive, disruptive company in MMA," PFL founder and chairman Donn Da-

vis said. "This sport is very young. It has a lot of room to evolve, a lot of room to grow." Ngannou is the centerpiece of PFL's expected growth.

He was still UFC heavyweight champion when contract talks collapsed last year with the company once the African fighter said his demands for health insurance and personal sponsorships were rejected.

UFC President Dana White stripped Ngannou of the belt in January 2023. Ngannou reached a deal with PFL last May that included a role as chairman and equity owner in PFL Africa.

Ngannou had put MMA on the backburner following his dalliance with boxing. The 37-year-old fighter floored boxing pundits when he took reigning WBC heavyweight champion Ty-

son Fury the 10-round distance. Ngannou narrowly lost the fight in Saudi Arabia in front of a crowd that included Kanye West, Eminem and Portuguese soccer star Cristiano Ronaldo. Ngannou is scheduled to fight former boxing heavyweight champion Anthony Joshua on March 8 in Riyadh.

But after that, Davis said Ngannou will make his anticipated PFL debut.

"It's 100% Francis will fight PFL MMA this year," Davis said. PFL's suggestion that Ngannou fight UFC heavyweight champion Jon Jones on a co-promoted card was rejected and ridiculed by White. Ngannou instead figures to fight Ferreira (12-3) or Bader (31-7), the only Bellator fighter to hold championships in two weight classes simultaneously.

"There's no other better heavyweights than the ones we have facing each other Saturday," Davis said. "Francis is attending that fight, he's sitting cage side, he's sizing up those opponents and we'll see if one of those two emerge strong enough, is a clear-cut winner enough to interest Francis. But I wouldn't bet against it." □

Associated Press

No. 1 Swiatek loses to Kalinskaya in Dubai semifinals. Paolini awaits in final

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iga Swiatek was upset by qualifier Anna Kalinskaya 6-4, 6-4 in



Anna Kalinskaya celebrates after beating Iga Swiatek of Poland during a semi final match of the Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championships in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Friday, Feb. 23, 2024.

Associated Press

the semifinals of the Dubai Championships after the world No. 1 squandered an early lead on Friday.

Swiatek was up 4-2 when Kalinskaya rattled off four straight games to take the first set en route to her third consecutive victory over a top 10 opponent.

Kalinskaya eliminated No. 3 Coco Gauff in the quarterfinals and No. 9 Jelena Ostapenko in the last 16.

"I feel physically much better than last year. That gives me a lot of confidence to play at such a high level," Kalinskaya said in her on-court interview.

The 40th-ranked Kalinskaya said the key to beating Swi-

atek was to stay calm yet aggressive.

"I know if I don't stay calm and I don't stay aggressive she is going to destroy me," Kalinskaya said. "That was my plan to stay aggressive and move her a lot. She's unbelievable. I'm happy I had the chance to play against her."

She will face Jasmine Paolini on Saturday in the biggest final of both their careers.

The Italian held off Sorana Cirstea 6-2, 7-6 (6).

Paolini saved six set points in the second set.

"I gave you a little bit of drama at the end of the match," she said in her on-

court interview.

Winning in just under two hours against her Romanian opponent, the 26th-ranked Paolini is a victory away from her second tour title.

Paolini reached the fourth round at the Australian Open last month her best performance at a Grand Slam where she lost to Kalinskaya in straight sets.

The victory ensured Paolini will crack the top 20 for the first time in next week's rankings.

She broke into the top 30 last October.

Her only WTA title was at Portoroz, Slovenia, in 2021. □

With 12-team playoff set, CFP already discussing possibly more teams for 2026 and beyond

By **STEPHEN HAWKINS** AP
Sports Writer

DALLAS (AP) — Now that the yearslong process to finalize how the 12 teams for the expanded College Football Playoff will be selected for the next two seasons is complete, there are already discussions about maybe adding more teams for 2026 and beyond.

The CFP management committee discussed the potential of a 14-team bracket on Wednesday, along with governance of the playoff and the distribution of growing revenue after the next two seasons. But the 10 FBS conference commissioners and Notre Dame's incoming athletic director did not reach any conclusions after meeting for nearly nine hours in a hotel at the Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport. "Really productive, very collegial, very collaborative," ACC Commissioner Jim Phillips said. "Not everybody loves everything all the time. It's just one of those things when you have 11 different entities. But I think really a positive meeting."

That commissioners met a day after university presidents and chancellors who oversee the playoffs approved the format for the five highest-ranked conference champions and seven at-large teams for the playoff field that triples in size for the upcoming season. CFP managers



Washington linebacker Edefuan Ulofoshio (5), on the left, and quarterback Michael Penix Jr. (9), on the right, celebrate after defeating Texas during the Sugar Bowl CFP NCAA semifinal college football game, Monday, Jan. 1, 2024, in New Orleans.

first started working on an expansion plan in 2019, though the pandemic likely slowed down some of the progress.

The timing is more pressing now on pending and potentially contentious issues, like money, since there is no contract in place for the CFP past the 2025 season.

"Today was good in that it created that sense of 'let's keep working even faster,'" Big Ten Commissioner Tony Petitti said.

The CFP and ESPN have agreed in principle to a six-year contract extension that runs through the 2031 football season that's worth about \$1.3 billion annually. But that deal isn't done

because issues related to revenue distribution and governance have to be worked out.

ESPN already has exclusive rights for the semifinals and championship games the next two seasons, but broadcasts for the additional early-round games this year and next still have to be settled since the 12-team format took effect before the end of the current deal. Executive Director Bill Hancock said the CFP would like to be done with the format and new TV deal within about a month. "We need to be done with this," Hancock said. "Today left everyone with an encouraging feeling."

Hancock said he wouldn't get into details about any of the discussions concerning revenue, format or governance of the CFP moving forward since everything is subject to discussion and change, but said there were "very positive vibes on everything that we had in front of us."

Like over the past decade with a four-team setup, no conference has automatic access into the new 12-team playoff. But now that field could potentially include automatic qualifiers for some leagues.

As for CFP revenue, under the four-team playoff system, the Power Five conferences received about 78%

of that money to distribute to their members, and the Group of Five got almost all of the rest. Now with only four power conferences, and the further separation of the SEC and Big Ten from the rest, how the money is split up is certain to change. The SEC will grow to 16 teams next fall with the addition of Big 12 powerhouses Texas and Oklahoma. Four of the 10 departing Pac-12 members are joining what will become an 18-team Big Ten.

Those two leagues earlier this month announced the formation of a joint advisory group of university leaders and athletic directors to try to find solutions to the issues facing college sports. SEC Commissioner Greg Sankey departed to catch a flight without talking to reporters.

One of the primary reasons that expansion to 12 teams took so long was that unanimity is required among all 10 conferences, plus Notre Dame, to make any changes under the current CFP structure. That too could be altered moving forward, giving certain entities more sway in decisions. Pac-12 teams are also headed to the Big 12 and ACC, leaving only Oregon State and Washington State in the Pac-12, though they will continue to operate the league while playing most of their games against Mountain West opponents. □



The NFL logo is shown on the field before an NFL football game between the Detroit Lions and the Dallas Cowboys, Saturday, Dec. 30, 2023, in Arlington, Texas.

Associated Press

NFL's salary cap skyrockets to \$255.4 million, up a record \$30.6 million

NEW YORK (AP) — The NFL's salary cap for 2024 will be \$255.4 million, up a record \$30.6 million from last year.

The cap number has gone from \$198.2 million in 2020 to \$182.5 million in 2021 following the COVID-19 pandemic. It increased to \$208.2 million in 2022 and \$224.8 million last year.

"The unprecedented \$30 million increase per club in this year's salary cap is the result of the full repayment of all amounts advanced by the clubs and deferred by the players during the Covid pandemic as well as an extraordinary increase in media revenue for the 2024 season," the league said in a statement.

Teams are heading into next week's NFL combine and preparing for the free agency period to open March 13 with an opportunity to spend more freely.

The increased cap total could impact how teams use the franchise tag. The 15-day window to apply the tag to impending free agents began on Feb. 20. □

Weekly SPECIALS



<p>WAS \$10.57</p> <p>\$7.71</p> <p>Per KG</p>  <p>Chicken Cuts small Teriyaki</p>	<p>WAS \$7.71</p> <p>\$5.42</p> <p>Per KG</p>  <p>Halskarbonade</p>	<p>WAS \$8.57</p> <p>\$6.85</p> <p>Per KG</p>  <p>U.S. Boneless Pork Sirloin/ Fricandeau</p>	<p>WAS \$17.27</p> <p>\$14.28</p> <p>Per KG</p>  <p>Huzaren Salade</p>
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<p>WAS \$2.91</p> <p>\$2.45</p> <p>Each</p>  <p>Dushi Banana Bread</p>	<p>WAS \$5.19</p> <p>\$4.57</p> <p>Each</p>  <p>Ocean Spray Cranberry Juice Cocktail 64oz</p>	<p>WAS \$2.62</p> <p>\$2.34</p> <p>Each</p>  <p>Peanut Patch Boiled Peanuts Cajun 13.5oz</p>	<p>WAS \$4.79</p> <p>\$3.99</p> <p>Each</p>  <p>Kraft Real Mayo Original Squeeze 12oz</p>	<p>WAS \$3.54</p> <p>\$3.31</p> <p>Each</p>  <p>EE Corn Flakes 18oz</p>
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DAIRY/FROZEN

<p>WAS \$5.02</p> <p>\$3.77</p> <p>Each</p>  <p>Maza Hoemoes Zongedroogde Tomaat 200gr</p>
<p>WAS \$4.68</p> <p>\$3.54</p> <p>Each</p>  <p>Mamba Jam Patties Mild Beef 2ct</p>

HBC/GM

<p>WAS \$2.28</p> <p>\$1.71</p> <p>Each</p>  <p>AMPM Plus of Algodon Absorb P100 125 100G</p>
<p>WAS \$5.99</p> <p>\$5.59</p> <p>Each</p>  <p>Reynolds Parchment Paper 10.9mx38.1cm</p>

DELI/BAKERY

<p>WAS \$1.59</p> <p>\$1.31</p> <p>100 GR</p>  <p>Provolone Cheese</p>
<p>WAS \$1.63</p> <p>\$1.37</p> <p>100 GR</p>  <p>Jamon Vieja</p>

DRY FOOD

<p>WAS \$2.51</p> <p>\$2.28</p> <p>Each</p>  <p>Melkan Volle Melk Gecondenseerd 397gr</p>	<p>WAS \$1.88</p> <p>\$1.71</p> <p>Each</p>  <p>To eat Marca Exclusiva Tomates Pelados 400g</p>	<p>WAS \$2.79</p> <p>\$2.28</p> <p>Each</p>  <p>Campbell Spaghettios W/Meatballs 15.6oz</p>	<p>WAS \$3.42</p> <p>\$3.08</p> <p>Each</p>  <p>Remia Margarine tin 450gr</p>	<p>WAS \$3.94</p> <p>\$3.59</p> <p>Each</p>  <p>Maguary Concentrado Maracuja 500ml</p>
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